

preferred embodiments, the setup menu or menus may be preprogrammed with default values so that users will not be required to access the setup menus before the users' first use of the present invention. As described above, particular instances of the present invention may be used by multiple users and mechanisms may be provided to identify particular users (i.e., calling parties). In preferred embodiments, the setup preferences of each user of a particular instance of the present invention will be recorded and employed when the instance of the present invention identifies a particular user.

[0074] It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications can be made to this invention of an apparatus and method for processing telephone numbers, without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention or of the claims. It is also intended that the present invention and appended claims cover modifications, variations, and equivalents of the apparatus and method for processing telephone numbers of the present invention.

1. An apparatus for processing telephone numbers, comprising:

an area code processor having

means, responsive to called party information, for producing a list of telephone numbers; and

a caller interface, in communication with a calling party and the area code processor, having

means for monitoring call initiation signals,

means, responsive to the monitoring means, for receiving called party information, and

means, responsive to the producing means, for selecting a target telephone number from the list of telephone numbers.

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